

Monthly Update – April 2015

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program

OVERVIEW

USAID-TAPP is increasing incomes for smallholder farmers, improving nutrition, and expanding markets through agricultural innovation and commercialization. The program is part of Feed the Future, the US government's global hunger and food security initiative to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the developing world. Feed the Future is focusing on the Southern Agricultural Growth Corridor (SAGCOT), a region the Tanzanian government has identified as the most conducive for agricultural growth. Working with our partners and the Government of Tanzania, USAID-TAPP is concentrating efforts on selected crops and regions to help transform the country's food security.

STAKEHOLDERS UNITE TO GIVE HOPE TO SMALLHOLDER FARMERS IN IRINGA

On April 28th and 29th, USAID-TAPP held a two day meeting with stakeholders from the tomato value chain. More than 30 participants from processing companies, agro-input suppliers, local government authorities, service delivery institutes, financial institutions, and farmer associations joined together to develop a strategy to help smallholder tomato farmers in Iringa improve production and marketing. The plan focused specifically on supplying tomatoes to

Darsh Industries. The meeting was followed by field visits to the Balton Tanzania training center and the Darsh Industries processing plant.



Photo by Fintrac Inc

Smallholder farmers, stakeholders, and agronomists receive information on seedling production from USAID-TAPP agronomist Fikirini Mkwangwa (on the far right).

The meeting aimed to increase tomato production and reduce postharvest losses by strengthening technical support to smallholder farmers. During the meeting, collection points were identified by stakeholders in order to help farmers deliver their produce to the processing plant.

Darsh Industries' completion of a state-of-the-art processing facility in Iringa in late May will offer competitive prices to smallholder farmers involved in tomato production. The facility, a \$5 million investment, is expected to process more than 200 tons of tomatoes a day which will ensure farmers a ready market for their produce. The inaugural trial will take place in June and July 2015. The factory will recruit a significant number of Iringa residents and experts.

"With 24 villages identified around Iringa, Darsh Industries will buy all varieties of tomatoes from farmers in a radius of 100 kilometers and interested farmers will be contracted and supported by inputs and agronomy support," said Dr. B.K Singh, head of agriculture and extension at Darsh Industries, during the meeting.

On the second day of the meeting, USAID-TAPP presented training to farmers in good agricultural practices (GAPs) and postharvest practices. The training covered agricultural practices such as use of seedling trays, hybrid seeds, raised beds, and integrated pest management—specifically how to battle the *tuta absoluta* pest which has been troubling tomato farmers in Iringa. Preventative and protective measures were also taught to the stakeholders and smallholder farmers during a field visit.

Meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis to monitor the execution of the agreed upon duties and ensure the success of the initiative. Other stakeholders will be added in order to uplift production, add value to the tomatoes, and improve land conservation through the use of GAPs.

OFSP TO INCREASE FOOD AVAILABILITY TO MONDULI RESIDENTS

On April 29th, in partnership with Eco-Agri Consult and the Mkombozi farmers group, USAID-TAPP conducted a nutrition field day in Mto wa Mbu, Monduli district. The event commenced with a field visit during which the guest of honor, Monduli district commissioner Jowika Kasunga and the farmers were given a tour of 1.25 acres containing three varieties of high density bananas and three varieties of orange-fleshed sweet potatoes (OFSP).

In order to guarantee the availability of food for drought-stricken areas in Monduli, more than 140 smallholder farmers were given 50 vines of OFSP each for multiplication purposes. More than 200 farmers attended the field day and received training from USAID-TAPP technicians on GAPs, business development skills, and OFSP preparation.

“Let us appreciate the good work done by USAID-TAPP and Eco-Agri Consult on ensuring clean tissue culture banana and orange-fleshed sweet potatoes are available in our area. I believe the one who gives you seeds is far better than the one who gives fertilizers or packaging materials for your harvests because what will you need the fertilizer for if you do not have proper seeds?” said Kasunga. He added that farmers who have adopted the technologies shown at the farm should be used as coaches to ensure that neighboring farmers utilize their plots similarly in order to increase production and eradicate food shortage in the area.

Joel Owola, a farmer from the Mkombozi farmers group, the group that hosted the field day, has confirmed increased consumption of nutritious food as OFSP production has increased the availability of food and vegetables to his family. “After receiving the nutrition training from USAID-TAPP technicians, I get vegetables from the OFSP leaves which are full of nutrients. With respect to the technologies, the use of raised beds in agriculture has resulted in a lot of harvests from the beds compared to sunken beds,” added Owola.

The Mkombozi farmers group’s demo plot contains 1,400 high density bananas and more than 20 OFSP beds on 1.25 acres of land. The plot is farmed using GAPs including raised beds and drip irrigation.



Photo by Fintrac Inc

The Monduli district commissioner digs up OFSP tubers on one of the demo plot beds during the nutrition field day in Mto wa Mbu, Monduli district.

Tanzania Agriculture Productivity Program **“Increased food security through enhanced productivity”**

USAID-TAPP is a five-year program implemented by Fintrac Inc. to increase smallholder farmer incomes through enhanced productivity, crop diversification, and improved market access. Visit www.tanzania-agric.org for more information on upcoming activities and to receive copies of monthly bulletins and success stories.

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